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Title : Mr. Speaker made references to the passing away of Shri R.Venkataraman, former President of India, a member of Provisional Parliament and a member 1st, 6th and 7th Lok Sabhas.He also made references to the passing away of Chaudhary Ranbir Singh, a member of the Constituent Assembly, the Provisional Parliament and 1st and 6th Lok Sabhas and Shri Periasamy Thiagarajan, member 6th Lok Sabha.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Shri R. Venkataraman, former President of India and two of our former colleagues, Chaudhari Ranbir Singh and Shri Periasamy Thiagarajan.

Shri R. Venkataraman, former President of India was a renowned freedom fighter who held several high offices during his long and distinguished public life.

Shri R. Venkataraman was a Member of the Provisional Parliament from 1950 to 1952; First Lok Sabha from 1952 to 1957; Sixth Lok Sabha from 1977 to 1979 and the Seventh Lok Sabha from 1980 to 1984. He was also elected to the Second Lok Sabha, but he resigned his seat consequent upon his election to the Madras Legislative Council in 1957. He served as Member of the Madras Legislative Council for two terms from 1957 to 1962 and from 1962 to 1967. During this period he served as Minister for Industries, Labour, Cooperation, Power and Transport in the then Government of Madras State. He was also the Leader of the House, Madras Legislative Council during this period.

An extremely able administrator, Shri Venkataraman served as Member of the Union Planning Commission from 1967 to 1971. He was the Union Minister for Finance and Defence from 1980 to 1984 during the Seventh Lok Sabha.

He took active part in the freedom movement and was imprisoned during the Quit India Movement from 1942 to 1944. He was awarded 'Tamra Patra' in recognition of his participation in India's freedom struggle. An outstanding legal luminary, Shri Venkataraman joined the Bar in 1935. He was a member of the panel of advocates deputed by the Government of India in 1946 to defend the INA personnel charged with offences of collaboration during the Japanese occupation of Malaya and Singapore. Later, he was a member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal from 1955 to 1979 and also served as its President from 1968 to 1979. He was awarded Souvenir by the Secretary-General, United Nations for distinguished service as the President of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal.

He also served as the Chairman and President of several organizations including the Jury for the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding; International Jury for the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development; Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Indian Institute of Public Administration.

Shri Venkataraman was elected as the Vice-President of the country on 31st August, 1984. As *ex-officio* Chairman, Rajya Sabha, he conducted the proceedings of the Upper House with great distinction. He was elected the Eighth President of India and assumed Office on 25th July, 1987. During his tenure as President of India, he added grace and dignity to the high Office.

Shri Venkataraman was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Madras; Nagarjuna University and the University of Burdwan. He was also conferred the Degree of Doctor of Social Sciences by the University of Roorkee. His flair for writing was acknowledged both at national and international levels. He has to his credit several books on political and social issues. He was also a recipient of the Soviet Land Prize for his travelogue on Shri Kamaraj's visit to the Socialist countries.

Even after demitting Office as President of India, the philanthropist in him propelled Shri Venkataraman to be actively associated with several welfare projects which touched the lives of ordinary citizens. As an elder Statesman, his sage advice was highly respected.

In his demise, the country has lost a sagacious Statesman, an erudite Scholar, a great Patriot, a distinguished Legislator and one of the most eminent leaders of our country.

Shri R. Venkataraman passed away on 27th January, 2009 at New Delhi at the age of 98.

Chaudhary Ranbir Singh was a Member of the Constituent Assembly from 1947 to 1950 and Provisional Parliament from 1950 to 1952. He was also a Member of the First and Second Lok Sabhas from 1952 to 1962 representing the Rohtak Parliamentary Constituency of Punjab (now in Haryana).

As a Member of the Constituent Assembly, he was actively involved in welfare initiatives for the citizens which find a place in the Directive Principles of State Policy. A veteran Legislator, Chaudhuri Ranbir Singh has the unique distinction of being the only Legislator who has been a Member of, I understand, seven different Houses in his long and illustrious legislative career spanning over three decades.

Chaudhary Ranbir Singh also served as a Member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1966; Member of Haryana Legislative Assembly from 1966 to 1967 and 1968 to 1972. He was a Member of the Rajya Sabha from 1972 to 1978 representing the State of Haryana.

He served as the Minister of Irrigation and Power in the Government of Punjab and the Minister for PWD & Health in the Government of Haryana. He played a pioneering role in the development of irrigational infrastructure in the State, particularly in the construction of Bhakra Dam and his efforts laid the ground for ushering in the Green Revolution which changed the lives of millions of Indians and made the country self-reliant in terms of agricultural production.

A freedom fighter, Chaudhary Ranbir Singh played a significant role in the freedom movement of the country. He took part in the Quit India Movement of 1942. During the freedom struggle, he courted imprisonment on numerous occasions and spent three and a half years in jail and two years under house arrest. In keeping with the true Gandhian spirit, after taking *sanyas* from active politics, he, along with others, formed the All-India Freedom Fighters' Organisation and remained its working President till his death.

An agriculturist and educationist, Chaudhary Ranbir Singh was the founder of a number of educational institutions. He was the Secretary, Bharat Kisan Samiti and President, Rohtak Krishak Co-operative Multi-Purpose Society. He championed the cause of the farmers, Backward Classes and the downtrodden. He was the founder General Secretary of All-India Backward Classes Federation. He strove relentlessly for eradication of social evils such as untouchability, inequality and injustice towards the oppressed and worked for the establishment of an egalitarian and secular society. [R1]

13.[R2]00 hrs.

He worked tirelessly for restoring communal harmony in the background of partition of the country in 1947 and rendered exemplary service for the rehabilitation of the millions of uprooted refugees.

In his demise the country has lost a fearless freedom fighter, an ardent Gandhian, a visionary and a distinguished parliamentarian.

Chaudhary Ranbir Singhji passed away on 1 February, 2009 at the age of 94.

Shri Periasamy Thiagarajan was a member of the Sixth Lok Sabha from 1977 to 1979, representing the Sivaganga Parliamentary Constituency of Tamil Nadu.

An advocate by profession, Shri Thiagarajan took special interest in the cooperative movement and was associated with a number of cooperatives. He worked for the welfare of the deprived and backward sections of the society. Shri Thiagarajan also served as a member of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers.

Shri Periasamy Thiagarajan passed away on 30 November, 2008 at Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu at the age of 69.

We deeply mourn the loss of these friends and I am sure the House would join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

13.01 hrs.

The members then stood in silence for a short while

MR. SPEAKER : The House now stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11.00 am.

13.02 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on[r3] Friday, February 13, 2009/Magha 24, 1930 (Saka).

Cd by c1 [R1]

[R2](Mr. Speaker - Cd.)

[r3] Friday, March 10, 2000/Phalguna 20, 1921 (Saka).